

# **CORRESPONDENCE**

**Shaneman, Malcolm**

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**From:** Perry Seiffert [seiffertco@covad.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 09, 2004 5:08 PM  
**To:** ricard.weaver@mncppc-mc.org; Shaneman, Malcolm  
**Subject:** Case Number 7-04022, Opposition to Resubdivision

To: Planning Board, MNCPPC  
From: Perry and Dianne Seiffert  
Re Case number 7-04022

We have lived at 8213 Kentbury Drive, Bethesda, MD for 33 years. On the plat ours is Lot 1, Block 6, Section 1.

We oppose the proposed resubdivision of the lot at 8107 Kentbury Drive, Bethesda, MD,. It is Lot 9, Block 6, Section 1, a few houses away from ours.

The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission Staff, the East Bethesda Citizens Association, and other neighbors such as ourselves have reviewed the proposal and oppose it..

We oppose the application for the following reasons:

- There is not the high correlation between characteristics of the proposed and existing lots required by Sec. 50-29.
- The lots would be unusually sized and awkwardly placed in comparison with other neighborhood lots. They would not be "of the same character as to street frontage" or size as the other lots, as required by Sec. 50-29(b)(2).
- The proposed lots would be smaller than surrounding lots.
- One house would be behind the other; there is no precedent for this in the surrounding neighborhood, per the first plan drawing attached to A. Malcolm Shaneman's Memo of Feb. 27, attached to the Staff's memo of the same date.
- The placement of the lots would necessitate development of an access road that was not intended for this purpose. We oppose creating another road.
- The proposal would create something weird looking in our neighborhood, an eyesore which many persons would see daily. Perry walks past the lot in question twice every weekday, and we both drive past it several times a week. It's on a main neighborhood road, which is fairly heavily traveled, so it would be highly visible as non-conforming.
- The right-of-way where the proposed road would go is at a low drainage point for this neighborhood. It carries water in two ways to an adjacent low swampy area immediately behind the subject property in the Columbia Country Club woods. First, surface runoff from adjacent properties runs the length of the subject right-of-way into this swampy area. Second, a culvert runs under the right-of-way from two road catch basins also into this area. The proposed construction could have adverse environmental impact on this drainage area.
- Our neighborhood is already being "mansionized" with the building of houses much larger than those they replace, but at least only one large house is being put on each lot. This proposal goes an unacceptable step further, by proposing to cram two houses on a small lot.

All of the above reasons make the proposal inappropriate for our neighborhood development. It

doesn't meet the requirements of Sec. 50-29. Moreover, it would cause a precedent that, in my opinion, would have a negative effect on the look of the neighborhood, and could have a negative effect on property values and community wellbeing. We oppose it.

March 1, 2004

Richard Weaver  
The Maryland –National Capital Park and Planning  
Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Weaver,

I am writing in reference to **Subdivision File Number: 7-04022**, a proposed subdivision in the Columbia Forest section of East Bethesda, MD. I am an adjacent neighbor of the referenced property. My husband and I are submitting our concerns regarding the proposed subdivision in response to the February 20, 2004, Official Notice of Public Hearing letter we received on February 24, 2004. Our objections to the proposed subdivision are outlined below.

I have resided at 8109 Kentbury Drive for the last six years; however, my husband has lived here for the last 14 years. He grew up in this neighborhood, only a block away on Newdale Street, in the house where his father still resides and has owned for more than 50 years. Because of the latest construction boom in East Bethesda, many of the original houses have been torn down and rebuilt into "mini-mansions" that have been selling for between \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 plus. The sales of these homes have drastically increased the property values of the surrounding homes, including ours. My husband and I are concerned that the proposed subdivision will decrease our property value because the subdivided lots will be very small and will not support the quality of house and value of those currently being built in the neighborhood. In addition, the proposed lots do not represent continuity among the other properties on Kentbury Drive. We are also concerned that approval of this subdivision will set precedent for other adjacent properties, which have bigger lots and could better accommodate construction of two houses.

We oppose the creation of the unnamed stub or street for the sole purpose of providing access to the proposed home which would back up to Columbia Country Club. The unnamed stub was included in the neighborhood plan as a placeholder in the event the Club is developed.

Lastly, we oppose the potential environmental impact construction of two houses will have on the existing property. There is an area of low lying ground located at the end of the unnamed stub. This ground has become submerged in water from run off and collection from rain and snow. Last year, we had a significant mosquito problem and are concerned that any construction to that area will worsen the effected area and create a bigger sink hole and provide a bigger breeding ground and increase the risk of disease carrying mosquitoes. There are also two very unusual established trees on the property. One, a rare growth variety of a Redbud, according to my husband, who is a horticulturist,

is of public garden class and is stunningly beautiful when blooming. The other is a grand Southern Magnolia. Both trees have been estimated to be over 50 years old. I, personally, would hate to see these trees sacrificed to new construction.

I appreciate your time and effort in allowing my husband and I to express our opinions and concerns regarding the proposed subdivision and wish to impress upon you and the Park and Planning Commission that we strongly oppose the proposed plans in an effort to maintain the continuity neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Colleen and Jeff Hoyt  
8109 Kentbury Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20814

**Shaneman, Malcolm**

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**From:** Isaac Hantman [hantmanzak@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 10, 2004 10:34 AM  
**To:** Shaneman, Malcolm; Kinney, Dolores  
**Subject:** Objection to proposed re subdivision, Case Number 7-04022

Dear Mr. Shaneman and Ms Kinney,

I am writing to oppose a proposed subdivision of a residential property in my East Bethesda Columbia Forest neighborhood at 8107 Kentbury Drive. This is Case Number 7-04022 apparently at Kentbury Drive, Lot 9

The current or prospective owner of the property has hired an architectural firm and has proposed a subdivision of this 13,200 square foot lot into two very small lots of 7,000 and 6200 square feet. There are NO lots of this very small size in the neighborhood and for this reason alone the proposal should be rejected. Then the current home would be demolished followed by the building of two new, no doubt large, homes squeezed next to each other on the property.

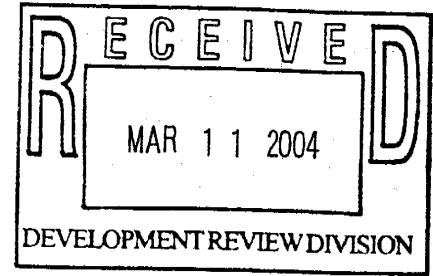
Subdivision of existing lots in East Bethesda is not a good idea as it will bring more large buildings on very small lots, more crowdedness and construction induced disruption to the neighborhood.

Thanks for your attention and effort in maintaining the high quality nature of our neighborhood.

Isaac Hantman  
4306 Rosedale Ave  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Jack

Anthony and Mary Kay Lyddane  
8211 Kentbury Drive  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-4744



March 6, 2004

Mr. Richard Weaver  
Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Mr. Weaver

RE: Pre-Application Plan Number 7-04022 (Subdivision File Number: 7-04022)

We are writing to oppose the proposed subdivision of existing Lot 9 of the Columbia Forest Section of East Bethesda into two lots – proposed lots 10 and 11. The M-NCPPC Staff and the East Bethesda Citizens Association (EBCA) Executive Committee are right to oppose this lot subdivision for all the reasons they have stated.

As neighboring homeowners, we feel such a lot change would significantly harm the character of our block and the East Bethesda neighborhood. We have lived in East Bethesda for over 16 years. We moved to 4413 Highland Avenue in 1987, and then moved to 8211 Kentbury Drive in 1995, and have always loved living in East Bethesda.

There are several sections or home styles within the neighborhood, each with their own look and feel. In very broad terms we would break the neighborhood into three sections. First, there are sections of the neighborhood with one-story bungalow style homes that are on small lots of about 6,000 square feet or less. Secondly, and this includes Highland Avenue where we previously lived, there are colonial homes, all brick construction and many with slate roofs and copper gutters, generally on lots of about 6000 – 9000 square feet in size, mostly built in the 1930s and 1940s. Finally, which includes Kentbury Drive where we now live, there are mostly one-story ramblers built in the 1950s that are generally on larger lots, from about 9,000 – 12,000 square feet in size, with a few lots of even larger size of about 20,000 – 30,000 square feet.

The neighborhood is close in, and like many close in neighborhoods is experiencing increased investment. Several homes have been knocked down, with significantly larger and updated style homes being built in place of the older homes. Generally, the older

colonial homes, often considered to have more character, are significantly improved and expanded rather than completely knocked down and rebuilt from scratch. We are not opposed to the current investments being made in the neighborhood. In fact, we are almost always pleased to see the improvements that are being made in the neighborhood.

However, the current proposal to subdivide lot 9 erroneously factors in other sections of the neighborhood – i.e. the owner is trying to consider what we have referred to as the bungalow section of the neighborhood as justification for subdividing a lot in the rambler section of the neighborhood. We understand this to be the main reason the M-NCPPC staff objected to the proposal – and we wholeheartedly agree with their objections.

We currently reside about 8 houses away from lot 9, on a lot that is slightly over 27,000 square feet, with about 60 feet of frontage. Clearly, it would not be in keeping with the character of our block or the neighborhood if we sought to subdivide our lot into 4 lots each slightly over 6,000 square feet apiece. Despite the neighborhood being zoned R-60, and though this course may increase the value of our property, it would almost certainly, and unfairly, bring down the value of the neighboring homes. While it may make sense to knock down and rebuild these rambler homes, we do not think it is fair to allow this homeowner the ability to build two homes on this one lot. The lots on this block were intended for one residential home, and while the economics may have changed, it would be unfair to allow one homeowner to change the character of the block at other's expense.

The proposal to have two lots stacked one behind the other, with a side / stub road access is clearly not consistent with any of the lots in the rest of the immediate vicinity, or for that matter to our knowledge with any of East Bethesda. While there are other smaller properties in East Bethesda, they are not in the immediate vicinity of the lot in question, and all of them have street frontage. Additionally, it appears these subdivided lots would not have front, back and side yards in keeping with the character of the block.

In conclusion, we live a few houses away on Kentbury Drive, and we oppose subdividing the lot since such subdivided lots will clearly not be of the same character as to street frontage, area or suitability for residential use as other lots on the block.

Yours truly,

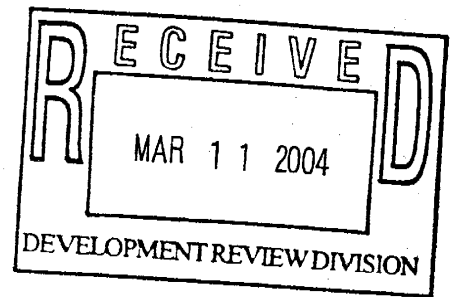
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony + Mary Kay Lyddane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony and Mary Kay Lyddane



March 8, 2004

Richard Weaver  
The Maryland National Parks  
and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910



Re: Case #: 7-04022

Dear Mr. Weaver,

We would like to express our opposition to the proposed resubdivision of existing Lot 9 in the Columbia Forest subdivision in East Bethesda. If allowed, the proposed resubdivision would result in two new lots which would be out of character with the existing neighborhood, and would set a precedent for a mishmash of back lot development detrimental to the quality of life and community in Columbia Forest.

We believe that the proposed resubdivision would be below the standards set by the existing neighborhood in terms of size, alignment and street frontage. The proposed corner lot would be undersized, the proposed back lot would be aligned nearly perpendicular to the main street, and the proposed back lot would have no frontage on the main street.

To provide any frontage at all to the proposed back lot, a new county-standard street and cul-de-sac would have to be constructed, with associated curb-and-gutter, sidewalks and storm drainage. There does not appear to be sufficient land area for such a cul-de-sac. Construction of a new street would be very costly, especially over the existing storm sewer and steep grade down to the Columbia Country Club property.

We have lived and raised a family in this neighborhood over the past 23 years. We do not want to see the neighborhood degraded by such resubdivision, and we urge the Board to deny this proposal.

Truly,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "Paul Taylor" and the second is "Dee Taylor".

Paul and Dee Taylor  
4307 Chestnut Street  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-652-5279  
taylorsres@hotmail.com



March 4, 2004

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning  
Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

**RE: Pre-Application Plan Number: 7-04022**

Dear Chairman Derick Berlage, and Commissioner,

I am here today on behalf of the executive Committee of the East Bethesda Citizens Association (EBCA) regarding the proposed plan identified above. EBCA is one of the largest citizens associations in Montgomery County. The association was founded in the 1930's and represents over 1,200 households east of Wisconsin Avenue, north of East-West Highway, west of Columbia Country Club, and south of Jones Bridge Road. The lot addressed by the proposed plan is in East Bethesda, and is therefore of interest to the association. While the general membership of the association has not had the opportunity to debate the proposed plan, the association's executive committee has, and did not want to miss the opportunity to express its concerns with the proposed project. They are outlined below.

The EBCA executive committee opposes the proposal as presented in the document prepared by Gutschick, Little and Weber, which was forwarded to your attention for consideration in January 2004. There are three concerns. First, the proposed lot sizes for the two homes which would be constructed by dividing the existing single lot are too small and do not conform to lot sizes for adjacent properties. Second, the proposed placement of the homes on the subdivided lot establishes an unacceptable precedent. One home would front Kentbury and the other would front an unnamed - currently non-existent - stub or street. The unnamed stub was included in the neighborhood plan as a placeholder in the event that Columbia County Club is developed. The executive committee opposes the placement of a home off the main thoroughfare (Kentbury) and adjacent to the Club. Lastly, the executive committee opposes the creation of the unnamed stub or street for the sole purpose of providing access to the proposed home which would back up to the Club.

In sum, the proposal is not acceptable to the executive committee. The executive committee will recommend that the proposal be opposed by the EBCA general membership should the project move beyond the pre-application phase.

Sincerely,

Jack Hayes, President

Post Office Box 41020, Bethesda, MD 20824-1020  
[www.ebca.org](http://www.ebca.org)